



A 501 (C) (3) Corporation

July 18, 2022

U.S. Department of Transportation  
Docket Operations, M-30  
West Building ground floor  
Room W12-140  
1200 New Jersey Avenue, S.E.  
Washington, D.C. 20590

RE: Request for Renewal of Exemption (Docket Number FAA-2002-13588)  
No. 4721R from Title 14 CFR (FAR Section) - 103.1 (a) & (b)

The United States Hang Gliding and Paragliding Association, Inc., (USHPA) hereby petitions, pursuant to section 11.25 of the Federal Aviation Regulations, for an exemption from paragraph (a) & (b) of FAR 103.1 as amended, so that the definition of "ultralight vehicle" will apply to the use of unpowered vehicles weighing 155 pounds or less to carry two USHPA-rated occupants for the purpose of flight instruction and the development of advanced flying skills/training by USHPA-certified instructors.

## Comments In Support Of This Request

The USHPA believes that the quality of the education and the safety of hang glider and paraglider pilots are enhanced by permitting the continuation of "in-flight" instruction in two-place hang gliders and paragliders. Two-place flights have been conducted since the beginning of our sport and the number of two-place flights has increased substantially since the exemption was granted in 1983. In the past sixteen years, more than 450,000 students have been provided flight training by USHPA Certified Tandem Instructors using two-place flights, 190,000 of them in the last seven years alone.

Two-place instruction is helpful in introducing the new student pilot to the launching, control, flying characteristics and landing of hang gliders and paragliders. Two-place instruction is especially helpful in developing proper control techniques, particularly stall recognition and stall recovery responses. It is an effective means for more experienced pilots to share their knowledge with junior pilots who are transitioning to flying in more complex situations. It is also a very effective resource for familiarizing a pilot with a new flying site.

The USHPA is committed to enhancing the safety of two-place hang gliding and paragliding instruction and operational standards. In the thirty-nine years since the original exemption was granted, the USHPA has continually researched and developed two-place instructional standards and to upgraded certification programs detailing proper two-place instructional techniques.

USHPA's Hang Gliding and Paragliding Accident/Incident Review committees evaluate flying-related accidents and incidents for the purpose of enhancing the safety of the sport. The committees publish accident and incident reports and provide regular summaries detailing the causes of hang gliding and paragliding-related incidents, accidents and fatalities in the Association's digital and print publications.

During the term of the current exemption, No. 4721R, there was one hang gliding tandem instructor fatality and eight paragliding tandem accidents involving serious injuries to six students and three instructors on tandem flights conducted pursuant to the current exemption. Since the last petition for renewal, approximately 50,000 tandem training flights have taken place.

USHPA continues to closely monitor two-place instructional procedures to enhance safety and evaluate rules for the maintenance of a tandem rating. These policies are re-evaluated during each exemption period.

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The USHPA has effectively administered FAA exemption from FAR Part 103.1(a) & (b), which allows USHPA members to operate two-place unpowered ultralight vehicles for flight instruction and pilot upgrade recreational flying for over thirty-nine years. The conduct of two-place flight provides a realistic environment that has proven to be a safer and more effective approach to hang gliding and paragliding instruction. The two-place instructional capability provides a “hands-on” training experience that facilitates a student’s transition to individual flight. It has also proven to be a valuable training asset for disseminating knowledge from experienced pilots to lesser-experienced pilots during recreational tandem flights.

The USHPA hereby petitions for an extension for Exemption No. 4721PR, as amended from FAR 103.1(a) & (b), and for the continuation of accepted USHPA two-place ultralight administrative procedures.

## Summary for the Federal Register

The United States Hang Gliding and Paragliding Association (USHPA) petitions for an extension of Exemption No. 4721R, as amended, from FAR 103.1(a) & (b), of the Federal Aviation Regulations so that the definition of “ultralight vehicle” will apply to the use of unpowered vehicles weighing 155 pounds or less to carry two USHPA-rated occupants for the purpose of flight instruction and development of advanced flying skills/training by USHPA certified instructors. The conditions and reasons stated in the original petition upon which the exemption was initially granted remain unchanged.

Respectfully,

Martin Palmaz  
Executive Director  
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cc: Steve Pearson, President  
Matt Taber, Vice-President  
Jamie Shelden, Secretary  
Bill Hughes, Treasurer  
Mike Meier, National Coordinating Committee Chair  
Matt Henzi, Tandem Committee Paragliding Co-Chair  
Paul Voight, Director, Tandem Hang Gliding Committee Co-Chair  
Doyle Johnson, Hang Gliding Training & Certification Committee Chair  
Greg Kelley, Paragliding Training & Certification Committee Chair

Attachments: Proposed Text of FAA Tandem Exemption #4721S (draft)

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## Proposed Text of FAA Exemption #4721 S

[This] exemption from 14 CFR § 103 .1 ( a) and (b) to' permit its members to operate unpowered ultralight vehicles (hang gliders and paragliders) weighing less than 155 pounds, with another occupant, for the purpose of, training, subject to the conditions and limitations listed below.

### Conditions and Limitations

1. This exemption is limited to § 103.1(a) and (b) only. Each flight must comply with all other sections of part 103.
2. All flights operating under this exemption must be for training purposes only. This exemption applies only to flights for the purpose of giving instruction in two-place unpowered ultralight vehicles from USHPA-approved launch sites to provide students with basic skills necessary for safe flight. There is no training program requirement found in part 103, so training should provide sufficient understanding of information provided in the FAA Pilots Handbook and Powered Parachute Handbook as applicable to part 103 operations.
3. Both occupants on all two-place training flights must possess a current pilot rating issued by the USHPA and at least one occupant must possess a current USHPA Tandem Instructor rating, or be in training for an Initial Tandem Instructor rating.
4. Prior to all two-occupant training flights, the student must be informed that the flight is conducted under an exemption granted by the FAA and that the ultralight vehicle does not meet aircraft certification standards set forth by the FAA.
5. For identification purposes, the USHPA shall issue an individual authorization to each person allowed to conduct operations under this exemption. Each authorization shall include an identification number and a copy of this exemption. The USHPA shall also have a procedure to rescind this authority when needed.
6. Each individual who operates an ultralight vehicle under the authority of this exemption must be familiar with the provisions contained herein and must have in his or her personal possession a copy of the authorization issued by the USHPA and a copy of this exemption. These documents shall be presented for inspection upon request by the FAA.
7. This exemption is not valid for operations outside of the United States.

[This] extends the termination date of Exemption No. 4721, as amended, to October 31, 2024, unless sooner superseded or rescinded.

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